

Backgrounder

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

May 13, 2005

Our Statement

Hamilton has the highest rate of poverty in Ontario - one in five residents lives in low-income households. Poverty rates are even higher among specific groups including children under the age of 12 years (25%), seniors 75 years and over (29%), and recent immigrants (52%). This is unacceptable.

We stand together as a community to find the solutions to poverty that will truly bring prosperity to Hamilton. We come together to act comprehensively and systemically to tackle the root causes of poverty.

Poverty Facts

- According to Statistics Canada, almost 20% or 95,370 of Hamilton residents are living on incomes below the poverty line. This is enough people to fill Copps Coliseum five times.
- One in four – or 25% - of children under the age of 12 in Hamilton live in poverty.
- From 1990 to 2000 the wealthiest 40% of Hamilton's population experienced an increase in their average incomes, while the poorest 60% of Hamiltonians experienced an overall decrease in theirs.
- In 2004 a single wage earner would have to make \$12.68 per hour in order to rent a one-bedroom apartment, for a two-bedroom apartment, the rate jumps to \$15.36.
- In the short-term poverty means having to make tough decisions like paying the rent or buying food. In the long-term poverty means greater risk of health problems, disability and even death compared to those living above the poverty line.

Joining Vibrant Communities / Pan Canadian Learning Community

The Roundtable has joined the Pan Canadian Learning Community - Vibrant Communities Initiative. What this means for the Hamilton Roundtable is:

- Access to a wealth of expertise and experience at Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement
- We will actively participate in the Pan Canadian Learning Community – sharing experiences and lessons learned with other Vibrant Communities across Canada; at the cutting edge of poverty reduction efforts in Canada; we will be a stronger Roundtable by learning from others
- Access to additional financial support

Where We're Going

Development Phase Outcomes:

1. Establish the community interest and will to address poverty in Hamilton.
2. Develop a comprehensive, multi-year poverty reduction plan for Hamilton.
3. Establish a leadership and organizational structure to support the plan's implementation over the next four years.
4. Secure funding and in-kind contributions to support the plan's implementation over the next four years.
5. Identify an evaluation framework and plan.

Community Engagement Strategy

- The community plan will be informed by, and developed with, the full participation of concerned and affected residents, organizations, business, all levels of government, the research community, and others.
- There will be a series of community dialogues and forums providing multiple opportunities for sharing our experiences, ideas and aspirations.
- These discussions will engage many voices in identifying concrete and practical solutions – some for immediate implementation and others that will focus on the longer-term.
- Further details on the ways to participate and provide input will be available in June 2005.
- In the mean time we encourage all interested individuals to contact the Roundtable if they want to learn more about this initiative or want to participate in our up-coming discussions.

Contributors

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